

LOGOMACHY

In this issue, Word Ways introduces a new column featuring various competitive word games; readers are invited to match their wits against each other. The title is derived from the Greek logos (word) and mache (contest), and is defined in Webster's and the Oxford Universal as (1) a contention about words, and (2) a game of word making.

CORRESPONDENCE CRASH (Mary J. Youngquist)

A fascinating game will soon be making a lot of noise: Correspondence Crash. Games are already echoing across the country, and even across the Atlantic. Word Ways readers are invited to add to the din -- read on.

Each player picks as his secret (and his opponent's target) word a five-letter word appearing as an entry in The New Merriam-Webster Pocket Dictionary, and "shot words" must be five-letter words from the same source. An entry is defined as the first word in its paragraph, self-contained and immediately followed by no other boldface item, and with non-literal characters, such as dashes, accents, apostrophes, permitted (and not counted as part of the spelling). Thus BRINE, WOMAN, NO-PAR, SHAN'T, PASSÉ, APRIL and -ISTIC are acceptable, but BRINY, WOMEN, REFIT (under the RE- words), MARDI and STATU (from IN STATU QUO) are not acceptable.

Players simultaneously fire salvos at each other and score their opponents' previous salvos on the same post card. Score each word in a salvo separately by indicating the number of crashes it made with your secret word. Salvo sizes: First - 5 (#1-5), Second - 4 (#6-9), Third - 3 (#10-12), Fourth - 2 (#13-14), Fifth and beyond - single shots. A bull's eye in one of the first four salvos is considered as having occurred at whatever position the shooter numbered it. The game ends with the first bull's eye.

A crash is an occurrence of the same letter in the same position. If your secret word were glove and my first salvo as below, you would score it as indicated. Comments, included in the parentheses, are not mandatory but enliven the game.

1. OVERT 0
2. GOURD 1 (you lucky fool)
3. BRAVO 1 (ditto)
4. KIOSK 1 (what do you use, a ouija board?)
5. SLIDE 2 (I smell a security leak)

Penalties: Mis-scoring opponent's word - all of opponent's subsequent shots (up to correction) are free. Using illegal shot word - word is counted but not scored (a "dud"). Using illegal target word - the pillory. Failure to score opponent's last salvo and fire back your own promptly or otherwise delaying the game, failure to report official games promptly, and other breaches of courtesy - exile to Coventry.

For games to be officially recognized and recorded by Word Ways, players should send their secret words to the Kickshaws Editor, Dave Silverman (hereafter called Ked), who will then assign opponents and an official game number by return mail. Ked will print game results and interesting annotated games in this column. Winners (in event of tie, player with higher ZIP Code number) should forward to Ked results in simple format together with annotations when warranted. Patronizing remarks, raillery, and other forms of gamesmanship occurring during the game correspondence will add spice to the annotations. Ked's functions: (a) act as repository for secret words, (b) arbitrate disputes over scoring, legitimacy of shot and target words, (c) record and publish results and maintain Crash ratings.

Is Crash a game of luck? About as much so as poker. There is considerable advantage in selecting secret words aptly, but the science is in the shooting. A scattergun approach at the beginning to gain a crash or two is usually best. Afterwards, inference from crashes and non-crashes (plus a little psychology) is an essential tool, but the key to the game is the wise selection of shot words to exploit crashes. It is guaranteed not to be a drag. Try it.

CAN YOU SCRABBLE? (Darryl H. Francis)

We assume that most Word Ways readers are familiar with the game of Scrabble. If there are any readers who don't know the game, we suggest they investigate it immediately.

We thought it might be a good idea to test the reader's overall awareness as, first, a logologist and, second, a Scrabble player. See how you measure up to it.

You are in the middle of a Scrabble game and the board looks like:

	S			A					
Y	A			S	E	R	F		
	G	R	A	P	E		A		
W	O	A		A			L	O	D
G	O		P			A	S	S	
						E			

To position this layout on a Scrabble board, put the E of GRAPE on the center square. You currently possess the letters A, C, E, O, T, T and a blank, which can, of course, be used to represent any letter. What is the highest score that you can achieve with one move, using your letters in accordance with the general rules of Scrabble?

Because the rules of Scrabble do not dictate which dictionary or dictionaries allowable words are to be taken from, we are appending some additional rules of our own below. Acceptable words must appear in boldface type in the main section of Webster's Third New International Dictionary, pages 1 - 2662. The term words is to be taken to include ordinary words (e.g. HORSE) and words that appear only as parts of multi-word terms (e.g. POUPEE from A LA POUPEE). Not included in the term words, and thus not allowable Scrabble words, are multi-word terms (e.g. AS HOW), two or more words from multi-word terms (e.g. LA POUPEE from A LA POUPEE), hyphenated words (e.g. ARCH-POET), apostrophized words (e.g. AIN'T), accented words (e.g. ÉPÉE, GARÇON), prefixes (e.g. INTRA-), suffixes (e.g. -ESQUE), combining forms (e.g. JUXTA-), symbols (e.g. FE), abbreviations (e.g. GTD) and proper names. Because of the way that the Third Edition treats the capitalization of proper names, we shall define a proper name as a word which is actually printed in the dictionary beginning with a capital letter (e.g. DACRON), or has either the identification "cap" or "usu cap" attached to it (e.g. FOUQUIERIA, DETROIT). Thus, all words labelled "cap" or "usu cap", as well as those actually capitalized, are verboten. However, words labelled "often cap" or "sometimes cap" (e.g. IRISHLY, DIESEL) are not considered as proper names, and so are allowable Scrabble words.

Readers are asked to send to the editor their highest-scoring solutions to this problem. We hope to be able to discuss the best solutions in the next edition of Word Ways. Please let the editor know if you would like further Scrabble problems to appear in Word Ways.